1/11/66

Mr. Jones Harris
242 East 49th St.,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Harris,

I went to the Archives this morning and examined the shirt and arranged for three color pictures for you. My recollection was correct on the two Hill exhibits, but when you get them please recall that Hoover told the Commission the original negatives got lost and copies were made from prints. There is a third color picture, made by the FBI. I do not know when they will be ready (the photo work is sometimes quite slow) but as soon as I get them I'll send them. I understand the cost will be $2.50 each.

My examination had be be more hasty that I'd have liked, but I did examine the shirt in a locked archive under very bright fluorescent lights and then, briefly, in a private office with a window facing the north. I could not take it outside.

I expected a much darker total effect than I got when I first saw it as it was being withdrawn from the heavy transparent bag in which it is kept inside a manila envelope. I got a very pronounced gold effect. This was true under both lights, and the gold effect was not diminished under natural light (no sun). I expected, from this strong impression, to find that the gold glittered when I got it close, as though it had a fine metallic thread in it. It does not. There are darker patches, and they have a purplish-black impact from a slight distance, with the suggestion of irridiscense. But this also is a deception. I also expected to find a dark brown cloth with a gold fleck running through it. This, again, is not true. The material is a quite thin thing between the fibres of which it is made. The fibres are about 1/16 inch thick and woven together like a fine grass mat, but not in a crisscross. Light readily shows between these fibres. It is actually a very light-weight shirt. I would say the colors are brown and gold, with a sometimes black effect despite the fact that none of the brown is that dark. I cannot explain it. Johnson noted this and agreed with my observations. It is really a brown with a yellow fleck. There are black threads. You can feel the raised effect of these rather thick fibres on a thin or light-weight shirt. The fibres also run crossways, in the case of the gold. The buttons are clear plastic but a little cloudy. They are slightly larger than dress-shirt buttons, about the size of work-shirt buttons. They are a little thick, without a tapered edge. Those the exhibit shows missing are, and the visible tufts of thread where they were are as in the picture.

There are two good-sized breast pockets, without flap or bottons. There are four sets of initials at the top, in both indelible pencil and red, like a broad, felt-tipped pen. One, on the outside left collar tab is "RL" (forgot to look under collar) On the inside, on the body of the shirt just below the collar: PMS, PB all these printed, and written in black (slightly broad, again suggesting felt tip) H?MD. I am not certain of this, neither is Johnson. I was less certain of the first initial. It is he who offered the H and I have no better suggestion.

The top button fastens not with a buttonhole but with a fairly thick loop that is in rather good condition, as though the button was not often fastened and suggesting to me (perhaps quite erroneously) little laundering. The left cuff is only slightly frayed, as it also is, very slightly, along the edge where the buttonhole is. The sleeves are slightly pleated where they join the cuff. Here there was a flat, roundish blob about a quarter of an inch in size suggesting wax. It was firmly attached. There were several much smaller patches of the same or similar material elsewhere on the shirt. This, I believe, is on the right cuff. The smaller ones I noticed are on the body of the shirt.

Both bottom buttonholes are torn, the lower one more. It is now about an inch long. Interestingly enough, the reinfofcing threads usually woven or stitched around the edges are not there. These are so enlarged it would seem that the shirt could not stay buttone , as the picture seems to show it to be. If this happened at the theater in the struggle, what then happened to the reinforcement. When the lowest buttonhole is the shirt is also torn on the inside. I'd say from the profunditity of my ignorance that in its day this was not a cheap shirt, going on the workmanship.

There are also markings on the bottom and on the inside. There is an encircled W followed by the numbers 12-18-63. There is VD and NTP or F. There is also what might be called a pair of F's backed up and pivoting a bit from the bottom. The right sleeve is torn about 9 inches from the cuff, not where the elbow should be. It is a spot that had been darned and is torn above the darned place. It is possible that the tear coincides with part of the patch, as it is that it begins at the end of the patch.

There is no visible evidence that the shirt was laundered after it was worn. It is well wrinkled, yet much of this could be attributed to the manner in which it is stored in a plastic pouch about 6x9, perhaps slightly larger. I detected no odor. The collar suggest that it was not well ironed when last it was laundered. Toward the points it is more wrinkled and to the feel seems a little thicker, perhaps because of this.

I hope this information includes what you want.

The color pictures will be 8x10s. Have to hurry for I've other things to do, ran late all day, and am to make a broadcast to San Fransisco at 11:30 by phone.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg

Dear Sylvia and Maggie, My judgement of Schiller was so utterly wrong I hesitate to offer an opinion to the two of you who were so right about him. The record was played on WTOP yesterday, then he was on a program on the station in the afternoon, behaving from what I've heard somewhat better than he did in NYC. Aside from my artist who heard it and belatedly phoned my wife so she heard part of it, I heard comment from noone at all today, including some of the better known correspondents who I saw. The Archive people, where he was briefly yesterday, perhaps so he could say he'd been there, implying he worked there, didn't even know he was on the air. He thinks so little of his record he didn't give them a copy. He was on the same late-night show I was on Friday. Only my artist, who again heard it only by accident (and only part) commented on it at all. He has attracte no attention, no mention in the press here. KCBS (Harve Morgan Show) played the record last week. They got not a single phone call on it. They called me tonight and I'm broadcasting on Manchester (The Revolving Whitewash is the record, the Unofficial Whitewash is Man. in my own nomenclature) and the record, if they want to go in to that. I did get comment on Man, today, all vio,ently negative, but from informed people The correspondents were aghast at the sheer literary incompetence and irresponsibility. Penn and LA just called, having known nothing until I wrote them Sat a.m. The Batman and Robin pictures were put up by the kids. They are not too disturbed, but are surprized because Sch. was so nice...Ebc letter to Bahmer on Ball self explanatory...Johnson's offhand reply today negative. He knows of no such thing....Bob Weiszman, self-described as the butcher with the surgeons on 12/21. Maggie, had done a very interesting thing with the wrong weapon and the wronf bullets, all of which deformed. He knows rifles and will duplicate when he can afford a Carcan. Ray may be interested. Please tell Ray he mono came yesterday. I took it to the big bookstore today but the mgr was too busy for me to do more than mention it because he had to double as cashier. I left it with Sam, my artist, who will read it and then give a sales talk for me that I'll repeat next week. Ball letter not yet typed. Will send. Best to you all.